had been so far futile, he requested a sympathetic consideration. Another need of the ryots of Mavelikara was the improvement of the canal leading from the Kulakada river to the Tazhakara punja fields. That channel formerly used for irrigation and commercial purposes had become silted up. The length of the channel was only 1½ miles and the cost of improving it might not exceed Rs. 3,000. Another important need of the place was a manure depot in a convenient locality near the Mavelikara Arattukadavu.

Dewan's reply.—Dr. Kunjen Pillai tells me that a private person has undertaken to open a manure depot on the agency system. It is much easier to start private depots by giving a certain amount as commission. In that way we can establish more depots. As regards the other points some of them are very important. I intend visiting Mavelikara and acquainting myself with the conditions of the locality. I shall consider these points after my inspection.

49. Need for establishing a Veterinary Hospital at Punalur.

Mr. Kanakku Padmanabhon Narayanan (Member, Pattanapuram Taluk) stated that, in reply to his representation on the same subject at the 16th session of the Assembly, he was told that it would be referred to the Director of Agriculture for an expression of his views. As the result of that reference, the Director of Agriculture recommended the opening of a Veterinary hospital at Shencottah and his recommendation was sanctioned by Government. The Member said that several heads of cattle were being imported from the British Districts *via* Punalur and that the establishment of a Veterinary hospital at that place, as suggested by him, would greatly tend to arrest the spread of any epedemic disease from which such cattle might happen to suffer. He doubted whether a hospital at Shencottah could possibly serve the end in view and suggested that, if a new hospital could not be opened, the existing one at Quilon might be shifted to Punalur.

Dewan's reply.—I shall come to Punalur soon, and I shall see the place and then consider the question. As regards the opening of the Veterinary hospital at Shencottah, it was thought that as it is a frontier town and as the cattle pass through that place into the State, the diseased cattle could be treated there before they come into Travancore. It was with that object that orders were passed to open a hospital at Shencottah. But the hospital itself has not yet been opened. After visiting Punalur I shall dispose of the question.

50. The Punja system of cultivation, its disadvantages and the necessity for a change in the attitude of Government towards the Punja ryots.

Mr. P. K. Narayana Aiyar (Member, Ambalapuzha taluk) represented that there were extensive tracts of tax-paying punja lands in Kuttanad and other places in the State; and that, though much revenue was being derived from them, the Government had been so far extending only a step-motherly attention towards punja cultivators as distinguished from nanja cultivators for whose benefit large sums had been spent in the past on such irrigation works as the Kodayar project, &c. Punja lands formed an important asset and, if they could be made cultivable annually instead of biennially as now, the necessity for the import of foreign paddy for consumption was bound to cease. These water-logged lands lay submerged in water and as such no ploughing worth mentioning was done on such lands. In cultivating these lands ring-bunds had to be put up and water from the fields pumped out at the joint expense of the cultivators who in many cases owned a continuous belt of land in small plots. For want of sufficient co-operation among the ryots, it had been found difficult either to put up bunds in time or to recover the proportionate cost of putting up such bunds and pumping out water, from the individual owners. In many cases, the bunds put up were not sufficiently strong for want of shrub and grass necessary for their construction. Punja lands depended for their manure on the silt brought down by rivers and canals, but those had now been blocked up by mud or had been encroached upon by the adjoining land-owners. Artificial manures were, if at all, rarely

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used. Nor was the use of such manures practicable, regard being had to the cost involved. The Member, therefore, made the following suggestions:—

(i) One thousand acres of land at Thottapalli in the vicinity of Kuttanad should be reserved for growing shrubs and grass.

(ii) The canals bringing silt to the fields must be broadened and deepened and new canals opened, wherever necessary. All encroachments and obstructions in such canals must be removed.

(iii) Modern implements of agriculture must be got down and their uses demonstrated.

(iv) The formation of Village Unions among cultivators must be encouraged.

(v) A summary and expeditious process akin to that under the Revenue Recovery Regulation should be devised whereby ryots owning lands in one block and failing to contribute their share of money and labour should be compelled to pay up the dues with a penalty without recourse to civil courts.

(vi) The Irrigation Regulation III of 1072 must be amended so as to make it useful to punja cultivators.

(vii) Sufficient funds should be placed at the disposal of the Director of Agriculture for distribution on easy and liberal terms for *bona fide* agricultural purposes.

51. Certain indispensable requirements of punja cultivation.

Mr. Lukka Mathai (Member, Changanacherry Taluk) observed that Government had been so far confining their attention to the improvement of lands in South Travancore and he called attention to the need for the improvement of punja lands in Kuttanad. In the first place, the Member said that heavy loss was being caused by the want of co-operation among punja cultivators and the resulting delay in the matter of putting up ring bunds around the fields or failure to contribute towards the cost of draining water from the fields. The provisions of Section 23 of the Irrigation Regulation were inadequate to meet the evil, the procedure prescribed being tardy and the applications made to the revenue authorities not bringing relief in time to avert loss. He requested that stringent orders should be issued to the officers concerned to dispose of, within 15 days of receipt at the latest, all complaints against parties failing to put up ring bunds or defaulting to pay the cost of draining the fields.

The Member observed that, even under biennial cultivation, most of the punja lands in Kuttanad did not yield a satisfactory crop. That was due to the poverty of the soil and the inability of the ryot to apply artificial manure which was costly. The fields would admit of annual cultivation, if the Mulakkanchira canal (otherwise known as the Vakkathanam-Kuzhimattam canal) and the Chalakkal canal were cut open. In response to representations at the previous sessions of the Assembly, a part of the Chalakkal canal had already been cut, but the work was given up for want of funds. Immediate steps should be taken for completing the Chalakkal channel and for the cutting of the Mulakkanchira channel. The cost might not exceed a lakh of rupees but that was insignificant, regard being had to the extensive areas of lands that would be benefited by the canals and the facilities that would be given for communication and traffic.

Lastly, the Member submitted that the Kuttanad ryots were poor and were often obliged to borrow money and paddy at exhorbitant rates of interest. A long time elapsed before a loan applied for under the Agricultural Loans Regulation was granted. Even if the loan was granted, the authorities demanded security valued at ten times the amount of the loan. He proposed that instructions should be given to the officers concerned to see that agricultural loans were granted on the security of properties valued at the prevailing market price and that applications for loans were disposed of within three months from the date of each application.

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